Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 033427 TOSEC 030065

21
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011
DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:LMACFARLANE
APPROVED BY: S/S-O:LMACFARLANE
---------- 020940
P 110741Z FEB 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 033427 TOSEC 030065

NODIS

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM COTONOU FEB 10:

QUOTE S E C R E T COTONOU 0235

NODIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, DM, US
SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER BLAMES AMBASSADOR FOR DIFFICULTIES IN BENIN-US RELATIONS

REF A - STATE 29352, B - COTONOU 197, C - COTONOU 186, D - COTONOU 167, E - COTONOU 81, F - STATE 10221,

SUMMARY: FORNMIN ALLADAYE SUMMONED ME "IMMEDIATELY" THIS AFTERNOON TO MAKE FURTHER COMMENTS RE USG-BENIN RELATIONS.HE SAID HIS GOVT NOTICED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH ATTACKED THE USG HAD NEVERTHELESS RECEIVED INCREASED AID. THEREFORE IT APPEARED THAT THE LINE I WAS FOLLOWING HERE WAS AN INCORRECT REFLECTION OF USG POLICY. SECONDLY, BENIN WAS ATTACKING OTHER COUNTRIES TOO, BUT THEIR AID TO BENIN KEPT INCREASING. HE THEN BLAMED ME FOR DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE DECLARED THAT WITH RESPECT TO SUSPENSION OF USG SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 033427 TOSEC 030065

ACTIVITY RE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM AND THE "REVIEW" GOING ON IN WASHINGTON, HIS GOVT GOT NOTHING FROM ME BUT "EXCUSES,OBSTRUCTIONS AND EVASION." WHAT COULD BENIN DO WITH SUCH AN AMBASSADOR?

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

COUNTRY TEAM BELIEVES BENIN GOVT WILL SOON PNG ME OR REQUEST MY RECALL UNLESS UNEXPECTED GOODIS BECOME AVAILABLE IN NEXT DAY OR SO. RECOMMEND THAT I BE RECALLED FOR CONSULTATION SOONEST AND THAT USG SHOULD BEGIN SERIOUSLY TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT SHOULD MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN BENIN. END SUMMARY

1. FORNMIN ALLADAYE AGAIN SUMMONED ME "IMMEDIATELY" THIS AFTERNOON. LOOKING AT ME GRAVELY AND ASSUMING AN UNFRIENDLY TONE OF VOICE, HE SAID HE HAD WAITED LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO "PUT IN WRITING" THE DOCUMENT HE REQUESTED OF ME ORALLY ON FEB 4 AND BY NOTE THE FOLLOWING DAY (REFS A THROUGH D). HE HAD CALLED ME IN TO MAKE SOME FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF OUR RELATIONS. AMERICAN "COOPERATION" WITH BENIN WAS DETERIORATING. USG TOOK POSITION THAT BENINESE PRESS ATTACKS AGAINST USG SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND HAVE EFFECT OF LOWERING THE LEVEL OF AID. HIS GOVT HAD NOTED THAT USG NEVER TOOK THIS ATTITUDE TOWARD ANY OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRY. IN FACT, OTHER COUNTRIES THAT ATTACKED S WERE GIVEN INCREASED AID (BUT HE COULD NOT NAME ONE). IT THEREFORE APPEARED THAT THE LINE I WAS TAKING WITH BENIN GOVT DID NOT ACCURATELY REFLECT AMERICAN POLICY. HE ALSO SAID BENIN REGULARLY ATTACKED OTHER GOVERNENTS IN PRESS, BUT THEIR AID TO BENIN KEPT INCREASING AND RELATIONS WERE GOOD (THIS REMARK IS TOTALLY FALSE; THE REVERSE IS TRUE). HE ASSERTED THAT BENIN WOULD CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT, AND USG WOULD DO WELL TO LISTEN. IN A THREATENING TONE HE SAID HE DOUBTED THAT WE WOULD LIKE IT IF THE BENINESE GOVT SHOULD LET IT BE KNOWN THAT USG TRYING TO INFLUENCE CONTENTS OF THEIR PRESS.

2. I RESPONDED THAT USG BELIEVED THAT "COOPERATION" REQUIRED TWO-WAY EFFORTS AND SENTIMENTS. WE SAW A RELATIONSHIP AS NEEDING NOT JUST A ONE-WAY FLOW OF AID AND ONE-SIDED EXPRESSIONS OF CORDIALITY, BUT MUTAL FRIENDSHIP, MUTAL COOPERATION, AND MUTUAL RESPECT (I STRESSED THE ADJUECTIVE "RECIPROQUE"). THIS WAS OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD ALL COUNTRIES. IN THE CASE OF BENIN, THE MEDIA'S CRITICISM OF THE USG WAS ONLY

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 033427 TOSEC 030065

ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES. I POINTED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO ABUSIVE CRITICISM AND ATTACKS AGAINST VITAL US INTERESTS AT THE UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA, INACTION IN REGARD TO INDEMNIFYING AMERICAN INTERESTS NATIONALIZED 14 MONTHS AGO, HARASSMENT OF OUR PERSONNEL FROM TIME TO TIME AND, MOST RECENTLY, NOTIFICATION WITHOUT EXPLANATION THAT WE ARE TO BE EVICTED FROM OUR CHANCERY, CULTURAL CENTER AND OTHER BUILDINGS. BEFORE I COULD ELABORATE FURTHER, HE CUT ME OFF SAYING THAT NONE OF THOSE THINGS HAD ANY IMPORTANCE AT ALL, AND I OUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THAT BY NOW. THERE WAS NO REASON FOR USG TO COMPLAIN ABOUT TREATMENT IT WAS RECEIVING FROM BENIN.

3. HE WENT ON TO SAY, STERNLY, THAT AS A RESULT OF MY POOR COOPERATION, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE GETTING

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

WORSE AND WORSE, NOTWITHSTANDING BENIN'S EFFORTS TO BE FRIENDLY. HE RECALLED NOSTALGICALLY THE TIMES OF MY PREDECESSOR, WHO WAS UNCOMPLAINING AND NEVER RAISED ANY TROUBLESOME BUSINESS OR ANY KIND OF PROBLEM. HE WAS A TRUE FRIEND. HE ARRANGED FOR THE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM TO BE BUILT. HE BROUGHT MANY PRIVATE INVESTORS HERE, WHO WERE READY TO PUT THEIR MONEY INTO THE COUNTRY. MY ARRIVAL CHANGED ALL THAT. AMERICAN AID HAD DIMINISHED. INVESTORS STAYED AWAY. FORNMIN HAD FOUND IT DIFFICULT, FOR HIS PART, TO EXPLAIN TO HIS GOVT THE NEW DIFFICULTIES ARISING CONTINUALLY FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE. FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE RELATING TO THE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM. THE "GAMES" I HAD PLAYED WLL ALONG ON THIS SUBJECT MADE NO SENSE TO THE BENINESE. CERTAINLY THE BENIN GOVT HAD DONE EVERYTHING IT COULD TO FULFILL ITS PART OF THE ARRANGEMENT. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN PRESSING ME TO CLARIFY THE PRESENT AMERICAN POSITION ON THE BRIDGE/DAM AND TO EXPLAIN MORE CLEARLY WHY THERE WAS A "REVIEW" IN WASHINGTON, BUT FROM ME HE HAD RECEIVED NOTHING BUT "EXCUSES (PRETEXTS), OBSTRUCTION AND EVASION." WHAT COULD BENIN DO WITH THAT KIND OF AMBASSADOR?

4. COMMENTING FAVORABLY ON MY PREDECESSOR, HE NOTED THAT WE WERE NOW LIVING IN A DIFFERENT EPOCH. THE BENIN GOVT HAD DIFFERENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES DURING THE EARLIER PERIOD. THE CURRENT CONDITIONS AND PROBLEMS DID NOT EXIST THEN. I NOTED THAT I HAD ALWAYS SOUGHT TO SETTLE PROBLEMS BY SYMPATHETIC NEGOTIATIONS. I POINTED OUT THAT OUR AID HAD INCREASED SINCE MY PREDECESSOR'S TIME, NOT COUNTING THE BRIDGE/DAM. THE
SECRET

AGREEMENT FOR THE LATTER WAS SIGNED FIVE MONTHS AND TWO DAYS AFTER MY PREDECESSOR'S DEPARTURE. I REMINDED HIM OF MY EFFORTS IN WASHINGTON LAST AUGUST AND SEPT AND LATER HERE, WHICH SUCCEEDEE IN BRINGING ABOUT A SECOND ROUND OF BIDDING ON THE BRIDGE/DAM AND EVEN RESULTED IN A BID. I HAD REPORTED ALL OF THAT TO HIM ALL ALONG. I REMINDED HIM OF MY EFFORTS TO KEEP BENIN FROM CALLING OFF THE LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR GSP.

5. IN RESPONSE TO MY REQUST FOR CLARIFICATION AND DETAILS RE FORNMINISTRY NOTICE OF EVICTION FROM CHANCERY AND OTHER BUILDINGS (COTONOU 211) TO ENABLE ME TO MAKE AN ACCURATE REPORT TO WASHINTON, FORNMIN DECLARED THAT HIS GOVT DID NOT NEED TO PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION. IT WAS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. HERE BENIN WAS SOVEREIGN. WE WERE ONLY RENTERS. WE COULD RELOCATE SOMEWHERE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. HE DECLARED THAT USG HAD FAILED TO COOPERATE WITH BENINESE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER GOVTS RELOCATE THEIR CHANCERIES A YEAR AND A HALF AGO. WE HAD HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO DO WHAT THE BENIN GOVT WANTED. ALLADAYE SMILED TRIUMPHANTLY, AS IF TO SUGGEST THAT THE EVICTION WAS INTENDED AS A REPRISAL FOR DIFFICULTIES USG ALLEGEDLY CAUSING BENIN.

6. WITH REGARD TO HIS REQUEST FOR SOMETHING "IN WRITING"

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

RELATING TO THE COTONOU BRIDGE/DAM AND THE "REVIEW" IN WASHINGTON, I SAID I HAD TOLD HIM EVERYTHING I KNEW ABOUT THOSE MATTERS WHEN I SAW HIM JAN 16, JAN 30 AND FEB 4. I HAD ACTED THROUGHOUT IN GOOD FAITH. I NOTED WITH A SMILE THAT HE WAS NOT GIVING ME VERY MUCH TIME TO GET INSTRUCTIONS. HE HAD MADE THE REQUEST FOUR WORKING DAYS AGO AND CONFIRMED IT IN WRITING ONLY THREE WORKING DAYS AGO. I RECALLED THAT IT TOOK MORE THAN 13 MONTHS BEFORE I COULD GET A POSITIVE HINT OUT OF HIM IN REGARD TO INDEMNIFICATION OF THE OIL COMPANIES. HE LAUGHED, AND HE APPEARED TO BE IMPRESSED BY MY POINT, BUT CLEARLY HE WAS NOT ABOUT TO CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT ANYTHING, AND I WAS LED TO THE DOOR.

7. COMMENT: UNLESS THERE ARE SOME NICE PRESENTS FOR ME IN TOMORROW'S CABLE TRAFFIC, SUCH AS NEWS THAT THE VARIOUS "REVIEWS" HAVE BEEN CANCELLED, THE MONEY TO PAY THE SANDERS AND THOMAS CONSULTING ENGINEERS FOR THE DAM PORTION OF THE BRIDGE/DAM PROJECT AUTHORIZED, THE SEARCH FOR $7 MILLION MORE

SECRET

FOR THE PROJECT LIKELY TO BE CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY, ETC., DEPT SHOULD DECIDE IMMEDIATELY WHAT TO DO ABOUT MY POSITION HERE.

8. WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT FORNMIN IS PLAYING HIS OWN GAME IN REGARD TO MY PERSONAL ROLE. EVER SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE, HE HAS CERTAINLY ACTED AS IF HE HAD NO INFLUENCE OVER HIS GOVT'S FOREIGN POLICY. NOR HAVE HIS PROFESSED VIEWS IN PRIVATE BEEN CONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF HIS GOVT. NEVERTHELESS, EVER SINCE HE SUMMONED ME ON JAN 16 (REF E) I HAVE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAS BEEN "SETTING ME UP" FOR SOMETHING. ALLADAYE HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN UNFRIENDLY. WE HAD ALWAYS HAD A WARM AND LIVELY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE KEREKOU, WITH SUPPORT OF AZONHIHO AND OTHER EXTREME MARXISTS, IS TELLING HIM WHAT TO DO AND SAY TO ME.

9. IT IS PERTINENT TO MENTION THAT ONE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY FUNCTIONARIES, FROM WHOM DCM WAS ENDEAVORING TODAY TO OBTAIN CLARIFICATION OF THE NOTICE, EVICTING US FROM OUR CHANCERY, MENTIONED THAT ZAIRE, A GOOD FRIEND OF THE US,. KICKED OUT THE AMERICAN AMB AND GOT MORE AID AS A RESULT (THIS SOUNDS LIKE THE SAME THEME ALLADAYE USED WITH ME). I MIGHT MENTION THAT THE ZAIRIAN AMB HERE, WHO FOLLOWS SOFT LINE DESPITE BENIN'S UNFRIENDLINESS TO HIS GOVT, HAS LONG BEEN PRESSING THE ARGUMENT WITH KEREKOU AND OTHERS (HE HAS TOLD US) THAT ZAIRE REALLY IS FOLLOWING AN INDEPENDENT BECAUSE IT HAD THE COURAGE TO TELL THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO GO HOME.

9. REFLECTING ON FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS THIS AFTERNOON AND THE LONG TRAIL TO THIS POINT, I HAVE COME TO CONCLUSION, AND COUNTRY TEAM CONCURS, THAT BENIN GOVT, IMPRESSED BY ZAIRE'S EXAMPLE, BELIEVES THAT, BY GETTING RID OF ME, IT CAN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

SALVAGE THE BRIDGE/DAM PROJECT (WHICH MEANS USG THROWING
IN ANOTHER $3-7 MILLION), PERHAPS EVEN GET ADDITIONAL AID
BEYOND THAT, AND ALSO BE FREE TO ATTACK UNITED STATES.

10. RECOMMENDATION;

A. UNLESS I CAN PRODUCE SOME SUBSTANTIAL AID GOODIES IN NEXT
DAY OR SO I RECOMMEND THAT I BE RECALLED SOONEST FOR CONSUL-
TATION. IF BENIN GOVT REALLY MEANS TO GET RID OF ME SOON,
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 033427 TOSEC 030065

WE WOULD THEN BE ONE JUMP AHEAD OF THEM, PROVIDED I CAN GET
OUT OF THE COUNTRY FIRST.

B. USG SHOULD BEGIN SERIOUSLY TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT IS
ADVISABLE TO CONTINUE AN AMERICAN PRESENCE HERE AT ALL. IT IS
ALREADY VERY DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT BUSINESS WITH BENIN. APART
FROM THE INCREASINGLY SERIOUS SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES IN OUR
BILATERAL RELATIONS, WE WILL HAVE EVER GREATER, PERHAPS EVENT-
UALLY UNMANAGEABLE, ADMINISTRATIVE IMPEDIMENTS TO EFFECTIVE
OPERATIONS (WE ARE BEING TURNED OUT OF OUR CHANCERY AND A
NUMBER OF OTHER BUILDINGS IN A FEW MONTHS' TIME AND WE MAY
WELL BE EVICTED FROM AMB'S RESIDENCE SHORTLY AS RESULT OF
GOVT'S CONFISCATION OF THE PROPERTY FROM THE OWNER).

11. SUGGEST THAT DEPT REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO USUN, ABIDJAN,
NIAMEY , LAGOS, LOME AND OUAGADOUGOU. ENGLE UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 15 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, FOREIGN RELATIONS, INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, CAT-B, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL RECALL, ALLEGATIONS, LEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE033427
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S-O:LMACFARLANE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: N760002-0014
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197602103/baaaeocw.tel
Line Count: 248
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER BLAMES AMBASSADOR FOR DIFFICULTIES IN BENIN-US RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, DM, US
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006